

Message Text

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QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SC, CB, GW

SUBJECT: CAMBODIAN DEVELOPMENTS AND US POLICY FOR USE IN
TALKS WITH GERMANS

REF: STATE 165852

1. AS STATED REFTTEL, DEPARTMENT SUBMITS HERewith FURTHER
POINTS ON SITUATION IN CAMBODIA WHICH YOU MAY USE IN PRE-
SENTING OUR VIEWS ORALLY TO BERENDONCK.

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2. THE MILITARY PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT FORCES HAS IMPROVED SOMEWHAT IN RECENT WEEKS. THEY HAVE RETAKEN CONSIDERABLE TERRITORY NORTHWEST OF PHNOM PENH AND EXPANDED THEIR POSITIONS AROUND KAMPOT, TAKEO, KOMPONG THOM AND ELSEWHERE. THE KHMER COMMUNISTS WERE UNABLE EARLIER IN THE YEAR TO CAPTURE PHNOM PENH OR SEVERAL OTHER PROVINCIAL CAPITALS DESPITE A MAJOR OFFENSIVE.

3. IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE WAR MAY CONTINUE AT ABOUT THE PRESENT LEVEL OF VIOLENCE FOR SOME PERIOD OF TIME, POSSIBLY AS LONG AS TWO YEARS OR MORE. SIHANOUK PROMISES 10 OR 20 YEARS. THE KHMER GOVERNMENT HAS FOR OVER A YEAR SOUGHT A CEASEFIRE AND NEGOTIATED END TO THE CONFLICT, MOST RECENTLY IN THE STATEMENT OF LON NOL ON JULY 9. THE COMMUNISTS HAVE REJECTED THESE OFFERS AND SHOW NO SIGN OF WILLINGNESS TO ENTER TALKS SOON. THEY APPARENTLY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT

IS ADVANTAGEOUS AT THIS STAGE TO PURSUE SIMULTANEOUSLY A MILITARY AND A NEGOTIATING SCENARIO AS HAD BEEN DONE IN VIETNAM.

4. THE COMMUNISTS PROBABLY ALSO BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL WIN THE CREDENTIALS BATTLE IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIS FALL. WE EXPECT VOTE TO BE VERY CLOSE (FYI. CURRENT TENTATIVE ESTIMATES INDICATE THAT THE COMMUNISTS MIGHT WELL WIN THIS VOTE BY A MARGIN OF ABOUT SEVEN VOTES. END FYI.) IN THE LAST YEAR A NUMBER OF AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE RECOGNIZED SIHANOUK'S ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION, WHICH NOW HAS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH 55 COUNTRIES COMPARED TO 50 FOR LON NOL'S GOVERNMENT. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT NO NON-COMMUNIST ASIAN NATION RECOGNIZES THE GRUNK. INTENSIFIED PREPARATIONS ARE NOW BEING MADE BY BOTH SIDES FOR THE VOTE IN THE UN THIS FALL. THE GKR WILL PROBABLY AGAIN SEEK POSTPONEMENT OF A SHOWDOWN VOTE ON THE KHMER ISSUE -- THE STRATEGY THAT WORKED LAST YEAR. DEFEAT WOULD BE A SERIOUS BLOW TO LON NON, BUT MORE SO ON THE INTERNATIONAL THAN THE DOMESTIC SCENE. SO LONG AS HE RETAINS STRONG US SUPPORT, HE WILL PROBABLY SURVIVE.

5. THE CABINET OF LON BORET HAS NOT BEEN OUTSTANDINGLY EFFECTIVE. HOWEVER, IT HAS WEATHERED THE RECENT TEACHER-SECRET

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STUDENT STRIKES AND STERN ECONOMIC MEASURES AS WELL AS THE ASSASSINATION OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION. WE BELIEVE HE MAY BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO RETAIN CONTROL.

6. ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE ENORMOUS. LARGE-SCALE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE WILL BE NEEDED TO SHORE UP CAMBODIA'S ESSENTIALLY AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY AND TO REBUILD ITS TRANSPORTA-

TION SYSTEM AND INFASTRUCTURE ONCE PEACE RETURNS.

7. ON THE COMMUNIST SIDE, SIHANOUK MAINTAINS A HARD PUBLIC LINE AGAINST NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THERE ARE VERY SIGNIFICANT QUESTIONS, HOWEVER, AS TO THE DEGREE OF HIS CONTROL AND INFLUENCE. IT APPEARS THAT HIS "DEFENSE MINISTER," KHIEU SAMPHAN, MAY BE ASSUMING A MORE IMPORTANT ROLE. CHINA CONTINUES TO GIVE DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT TO SIHANOUK, BUT HAS HEDGED ITS BETS BY WARMLY RECEIVING THE IN-COUNTRY INSURGENT LEADERS DURING A RECENT TOUR. WE BELIEVE THAT WHATEVER ELSE IS PERCEIVED ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE CAMBODIAN SITUATION, THE KHMER REPUBLIC HAS SURVIVED A MOST DIFFICULT FOUR YEARS. TRUE, THIS HAS BEEN DONE WITH LARGE US AID GRANTS, BUT WITHOUT DIRECT US MILITARY GROUND INTERVENTION. ALL THE INDICATORS NOW POINT TO A MILITARY STALEMATE WITH NEITHER SIDE ABLE TO DESTROY THE MILITARY FORCES OF THE OTHER. THE GKR HAS OFFERED TO TALK UNCONDITIONALLY. WE SUPPORT THIS AND HOPE THAT OTHERS WILL AS WELL. KISSINGER UNQUOTE

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